

**Opening Statement  
Chairman Mark Souder**

**“Drug Prevention Programs and the Fiscal Year 2006 Drug Control Budget:  
Is the Federal Government Neglecting Illegal Drug Use Prevention?”**

**Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy,  
and Human Resources  
Committee on Government Reform**

**April 26, 2005**

Good afternoon, and thank you all for coming. This hearing is the third in a series of hearings providing oversight of the President’s budget proposals for drug control programs, as well as for legislation to reauthorize the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) and the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) program. This hearing will focus on the President’s proposals for the federal government’s drug use prevention programs.

Prevention – “stopping use before it starts,” in the words of President Bush’s recent National Drug Strategy Report – is a vital component of any effective drug control strategy. In many respects, it is the most important component, since it is the demand for drugs that attracts the supply. Prevention aimed at reducing drug use by young people is, in turn, the most important kind of demand reduction.

The federal government’s major prevention programs include the Safe and Drug-Free Schools (SDFS) program at the Department of Education, which includes formula grants to the states, and “national programs”; the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign (the “Media Campaign”) at the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), which helps fund a national advertising campaign to educate young people and parents about the dangers of drug abuse; the Drug-Free Communities (DFC) program at ONDCP, which provides small grants to local “coalitions” of organizations and individuals who come together for drug use prevention efforts in their communities; and prevention programs funded through grants provided by the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP), part of the Substance and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

The federal government also funds significant research and development of drug prevention methods, through CSAP, and the Counterdrug Technology Assessment Center (CTAC) at ONDCP. The federal government also funds research into the health risks of drug abuse at the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), a division of the National Institutes of Health (NIH, also a part of HHS), the results of which are then publicized by NIDA and other federal agencies.

The Administration’s budget proposals for these programs raise very serious questions about the future of federal prevention efforts. The SDFS state grants, which Congress funded at \$437 million in fiscal year 2005, are being targeted for total elimination; the “national programs” would only increase from \$155 million to \$232 million, creating a net loss of nearly \$360 million in drug prevention education funds. The DFC and Media Campaign would be flat-funded (which, when inflation is taken into account, amounts to a decrease in total resources for the programs). Even SAMHSA’s prevention funds would be reduced by \$14 million (from \$198 million for FY 2005 to \$184 million), while NIDA’s prevention research funds would increase by only \$2 million (from \$412 million to \$414 million).

As a result, prevention now accounts for only 13% of the total drug control budget. This raises significant questions about the Administration’s prevention strategy. Although the Administration has valid concerns about how effective our prevention programs have been in reducing drug use, I believe the appropriate response is to reform the existing programs by making them more accountable, or to

propose new and better programs. The Administration's deep cuts, unaccompanied by any new proposals, suggest a significant abandonment of even the concept of prevention. That would be a serious mistake. Unless the nation is able to reduce drug use demand, there will always be a market for illegal drugs.

These budget proposals are particularly regrettable, given the previous improvements the Administration made in the federal prevention strategy. For example, ONDCP has revitalized the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign (the "Media Campaign"). In the late 1990's, the Media Campaign had suffered from a lack of direction as well as contractor difficulties (due to accounting irregularities by Ogilvie & Mather, the advertising firm responsible for the Media Campaign). Questions were raised as to whether the Media Campaign should be continued at all.

ONDCP Director John Walters made the Media Campaign a major priority for the Administration. First, ONDCP took steps to resolve the accounting irregularities, eventually replacing Ogilvie & Mather. Second, the Media Campaign sought to maximize its impact by running a series of advertisements intended to educate young people and parents about specific problems – including the dangers of ecstasy (MDMA), the link between the drug trade and terrorism, the importance of parental guidance, and the risks of marijuana use.

The results – in increased accountability, increased awareness among young people of the dangers of drug use, and decreased youth drug abuse – speak for themselves. Although not all of the program's advertisements are equally successful, this is true of any advertising campaign. Overall, the Media Campaign has been established as a major component of effective drug control policy.

The Administration has also taken a leadership role in promoting drug testing in the schools. Drug testing shows great promise in preventing young people from using narcotics; it is also a tool for identifying which students will need treatment and other special help to get them off drugs and achieve their true potential. It is also an excellent tool for measuring the success of other drug use prevention programs, as it shows whether the true "bottom line" – reducing drug use – has been achieved.

Instead of cutting SDFS and other programs, the Administration should provide the same kind of innovative leadership. Safe and Drug-Free Schools and similar programs have great potential as a vehicle for bringing effective anti-drug education to millions of young people in our schools. The program has certainly suffered from a lack of accountability (due to statutory limits on data collection), as well as a lack of focus on drug abuse education. The Administration has never attempted to reform this program, however, which ought to be the first step – not eliminating it entirely. It is more important than ever for ONDCP to focus attention on this vital area of drug policy.

Regrettably, neither ONDCP nor the Department of Education was able to send a witness to discuss the Administration's inadequate budget request. However, I am pleased to welcome my friend and fellow Hoosier, Charles Curie, the Administrator of SAMHSA, to discuss the prevention budget and strategy from the perspective of his agency. We are grateful to him for joining us today.

As with all of our hearings dealing with these issues, we try to reach out to private organizations and local communities to learn about the potential impact of budget changes. Representing two of the largest and most distinguished prevention organizations, we are pleased to be joined by General Arthur Dean, Chairman and CEO of the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA); and Mr. Stephen J. Pasierb, President and CEO of Partnership for a Drug-Free America (PDFA). We also welcome Ms. Bonnie Hedrick, Executive Director of the Ohio Resource Network for Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities; Mr. Clarence Jones, Coordinator of the Safe and Drug-Free Youth Section at Fairfax County, Virginia Public Schools; Ms. Tracy McKoy, a Parent Coordinator in Fairfax County; and Ms. Ashley Izadpanah, a student volunteer in Fairfax County. We thank all of our witnesses for joining us today, and we look forward to hearing your testimony.

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### **Questions for the Record for the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), and the Department of Education**

As I indicated in my opening statement, neither ONDCP nor the Department of Education was able to send a witness to this hearing. This is regrettable, as the Administration has proposed very significant changes to the federal government's prevention budget. Had ONDCP and the Education Department sent witnesses, I would have asked them the following questions, which we will now ask them to fully respond in writing:

1. Since Director Walters became head of ONDCP in 2001, the Administration has identified drug use prevention as one of the critical three “pillars” of effective drug control. The percent of federal funding proposed in the Administration's budget for prevention, however, has dropped to only 13 percent of the total drug control budget. Why is this “pillar” so much shorter than the other two?
2. If the Safe and Drug-Free Schools state grants cannot demonstrate results by OMB's reckoning, why didn't the Administration – at any time in the last four years – propose reforming the grants to make them more accountable and effective?
3. If the Administration has lost confidence in the Safe and Drug-Free Schools state grants, but is prepared to boost the funding for the SDFS national programs grants, then why didn't the Administration propose moving all of the funding for the state grants to the national programs, instead of only a portion?
4. The Administration has proposed level funding for the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign, and the Drug-Free Communities support program. Given inflation, this amounts to a reduction in total resources for both programs. Why didn't the Administration at least propose an increase to keep pace with inflation?
5. Why did ONDCP suspend the regular meetings of the “demand reduction working group,” which used to bring together senior political appointees from the federal agencies involved in drug control?
6. Does the Administration believe that student drug testing alone, unaccompanied by education or other prevention programs, will be effective? If not, what kinds of programs need to accompany the testing?
7. What changes to the law authorizing the Media Campaign would ONDCP like to request from Congress? What should the role of the Partnership for a Drug-Free America, or other non-governmental organizations be?